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LETTER DATED 9 AUGUST 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF DJIBOUTI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the current month, I am addressing this letter to you on behalf of the members of the Group and as requested by them at their meeting held on 8 August 1996.

I should like to refer to the note by the President of the Security Council on the simplification of the list of matters of which the Council is seized (rule 11 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council) (S/1996/603 and Corr.1).

I should like to place on record the opposition, in general, of the States members of the Arab Group to the measures set forth in the note for the deletion from the list of matters of which the Council is seized of those matters that are not being considered and their opposition, in particular, to the deletion of matters relevant to Arab issues.

The note and its annex were drafted at an informal meeting and without consulting the other members of the United Nations. Such a procedure fails to ensure the required transparency, ignores the views of the overwhelming majority of Member States and confronts States interested in matters whose deletion is proposed with a fait accompli that they did not participate in creating and on which they were not consulted.

In addition to the foregoing and over and above the mistakes to be noted in the annex - some of the dates of the Council's consideration of matters proposed for deletion, the note and its annex commit a fundamental error in adopting as a criterion the Council's consideration of matters in formal meetings while ignoring the possibility of their having been considered in its informal meetings and consultations. The norms proposed in the note ignore the historical importance of many of the matters that it is proposed to delete and that we regard as still of the utmost importance and as pertaining to the core of the Security Council's jurisdiction in the domain of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The States members of the Arab Group urge that the arrangements set forth in the note and its annex should be reconsidered, that there is a need for prior consultation and the highest degree of transparency with the State or States that originally requested the inclusion of an item, as has been customary, before proceeding to its deletion, and that the principle of automatic deletion should be completely abandoned so that States outside the Council will not be confronted with it unexpectedly.

Finally, the aspirations of the States of the Arab Group with regard to the further development and reform of the methods of work of the Council, aspirations that it shares with the overwhelming majority of Member States, go far beyond any mere attempt by the Council to simplify the list of matters of which it is seized and extend to issues that are more important for the evolution of the role of the Council in maintaining international peace and security.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Roble OLHAYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the Arab Group